



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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110 rural districts share \$3.6 million in sparsity aid

MADISON—Wisconsin's small rural school districts are receiving notification of their share of a new \$3.6 million categorical aid program enacted as part of the 2007-09 budget.

School districts are eligible for sparsity aid if their 2007-08 enrollment is no more than 725 students, enrollment density is less than 10 students per square mile, and at least 20 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Payments were set in legislation at \$150 or \$300 per student depending on district poverty levels. For the 2008-09 school year, aid will go to 110 qualifying districts serving nearly 50,000 students.

"Investing in our rural schools advances future economic development," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "This new sparsity aid will support our public school districts in their important role of educating students in our rural communities."

The new aid program was part of Burmaster's biennial budget request to help small, rural districts confront common issues. The State Superintendent's Rural Advisory Council highlighted the lack of economies of scale, declining enrollment, rapidly rising property values, low median income, higher transportation costs, and large geographic boundaries as challenges that impact small, rural districts' ability to provide a quality education for every child. Sen. Kathy Vinehout (D-Alma) provided strong support for including the aid as part of the state's budget.

Wisconsin has more than 76,000 farms dotted across its rural landscape, and about 44 percent of the state's public school students call rural communities home. Districts with the lowest student density, students per square mile, are among the state's lowest wealth districts in terms of average income. On average, these districts have higher poverty rates, higher transportation costs, and in some cases, have high property values that result in the district receiving lower levels of state aid due to the districts'

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property “wealth” as measured by the state school aid formula. Roughly 30 other states incorporate a sparsity factor into their state school aid formula or provide direct assistance to small, rural districts.

“Wisconsin has an obligation to keep its rural schools and communities strong,” Burmaster said. “The local school is often the social center of small, rural communities. With technological, scientific, and global advances making quality education ever more vital, this aid will help our rural schools build capacity to offer educational opportunities that will help their students compete in the 21st century.”

For the 2008-09 sparsity aid payment, school membership was based on enrollment for the 2007-08 school year. Total membership for the 110 eligible districts was 49,612 students. Poverty rates ranged from 20 percent in the Pepin Area School District to 81 percent in the Lac du Flambeau School District. The average poverty rate was 38 percent. The 2008-09 aid appropriation of \$3,644,600 will result in per pupil payments prorated at 45 percent of the authorized amount and paid on the third Monday of September.

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NOTE: A list of districts eligible for Sparsity Aid and their prorated aid amount to be paid on Sept. 15, 2008, is attached. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008_97.pdf.

2008-09 Sparsity Aid Allocation

Prorated Aid Amount Based on 2007-08 Data

Algoma, \$42,204	Glidden, \$27,509	Plum City, \$21,001
Alma, \$19,190	Goodman-Armstrong, \$24,155	Port Edwards, \$31,334
Alma Center, \$80,113	Granton Area, \$19,659	Potosi, \$27,375
Almond-Bancroft, \$32,273	Greenwood, \$29,724	Prairie Farm, \$21,873
Argyle, \$23,618	Gresham, \$20,867	Prentice, \$32,877
Athens, \$36,635	Herman, \$5,972	Princeton, \$26,771
Augusta, \$44,552	Hillsboro, \$38,715	Randolph, \$33,347
Bangor, \$43,009	Hurley, \$45,223	Rib Lake, \$32,139
Bayfield, \$60,789	Independence, \$23,886	River Ridge, \$37,238
Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine, \$35,964	Ithaca, \$22,343	Rosholt, \$42,807
Belmont Community, \$22,679	Kickapoo Area, \$28,449	Royall, \$38,580
Benton, \$16,640	Lac du Flambeau, \$60,655	Seneca, \$19,525
Birchwood, \$38,647	La Farge, \$16,371	Sevastopol, \$42,204
Black Hawk, \$31,133	Lake Holcombe, \$27,979	Shell Lake, \$39,117
Blair-Taylor, \$47,236	Juda, \$19,592	Shullsburg, \$25,429
Bowler, \$28,851	Laona, \$16,841	Siren, \$72,330
Bruce, \$39,184	Lena, \$29,925	Solon Springs, \$22,880
Butternut, \$12,144	Linn J4, \$7,179	Spring Valley, \$47,236
Cambria-Friesland, \$29,455	Loyal, \$38,715	South Shore, \$14,359
Cashton, \$37,104	Luck, \$36,769	Southwestern Wisconsin, \$38,849
Cassville, \$18,921	Marion, \$38,983	Suring, \$34,622
Clayton, \$25,698	Mellen, \$20,129	Tigerton, \$23,282
Clear Lake, \$45,357	Mercer, \$10,735	Thorp, \$40,056
Cochrane-Fountain City, \$45,022	Minocqua J1, \$40,593	Three Lakes, \$39,251
Cornell, \$33,481	New Auburn, \$21,538	Turtle Lake, \$34,085
Cuba City, \$42,204	New Lisbon, \$43,344	Wabeno Area, \$37,708
De Soto Area, \$38,715	Niagara, \$30,126	Big Foot UHS, \$37,104
Drummond, \$33,548	North Crawford, \$30,931	Washburn, \$39,385
Edgar, \$46,967	North Lakeland, \$12,413	Wausaukee, \$41,398
Elcho, \$25,832	Northwood, \$29,120	Wauzeka-Steuben, \$21,873
Eleva-Strum, \$42,673	Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton, \$46,632	Weston, \$21,940
Elmwood, \$24,020	Owen-Withee, \$41,868	Weyerhaeuser Area, \$24,691
Flambeau, \$86,017	Pecatonica Area, \$30,193	White Lake, \$15,902
Florence, \$39,654	Pepin Area, \$19,055	Winter, \$55,824
Frederic, \$38,782	Phelps, \$10,400	Wonewoc-Union Center, \$27,375
Gilman, \$64,949	Pittsville, \$46,699	Woodruff J1, \$33,414
Gilmanton, \$14,761	Tri-County Area, \$48,108	